

## Hobbies

# When it comes to discolored coins, the proof may be in the packaging

By Roger Boye

Uncle Sam is trying to determine why some coins in government-packaged proof sets have discolored.

"Our production people are running chemical tests on a 1984 set," said Terry Abdoo, press secretary and special assistant to the director of the United States Mint. "We're taking this problem very seriously."

Since 1982 proof sets have contained five coins—cent thru half dollar—housed in hard-plastic cases that are sonically sealed to keep out dust and moisture. The packaging is supposed to help preserve proof coins indefinitely, but a few hobbyists report that the coins in some sets—especially 1984s and 1985s—have discolored or even corroded.



Dwight D. Eisenhower will be on a dollar as general and president.

Abdoo refused to speculate on what might be causing the problem, adding that test results should be ready within several weeks.



Yet another of the 15 known 1804 silver dollars has changed

hands, this time for "a mid-six-figure price," according to the company that brokered the sale.

"Both the buyer and seller want to remain anonymous, and we've agreed not to release the exact price," said Reid Spencer, director of numismatic sales for Heri-

tage Rare Coin Galleries of Dallas. "The buyer intends to keep the coin, probably for an extended period."

The 1804 dollar in this latest deal is worn slightly, unlike the two pristine specimens that were on the market last summer. In July, a rare-coin limited partnership and a Louisiana company paid \$990,000 for an 1804 dollar, a record price for a single coin sold at public auction. A few weeks later, two rare-coin firms said they paid between \$2 million and \$4 million for an 1804 dollar and eight other coins.

Spencer said that Heritage had its dollar on the market for six weeks and closed the transaction earlier this month. In 1984, the same coin sold at auction for \$198,000.

Ironically, the U. S. government produced no silver dollars in 1804. Eight of the coins known today were created in the 1830s for inclusion in special coin sets and the others in the late 1850s for sale to collectors.



Dwight D. Eisenhower will be

depicted twice—once as a five-star general and once as president—on a new silver dollar to be issued next year in honor of his 100th birthday.

Congress has authorized the United States Mint to produce and sell to collectors up to four million of the commemorative dollars, each containing .77 of an ounce of silver. The "tails side" design will illustrate Eisenhower's Gettysburg, Pa., home.

Collectors who order the coins during January or February will be charged \$23 for an uncirculated dollar and \$25 for a proof specimen. After that, the uncirculated will go for \$26 and the proofs for \$29.

In the next few weeks, mint officials will send order forms to persons on the government mailing list. Collectors not on the list can request a form by writing to the mint's Customer Service Center, 10001 Aerospace Drive, Lanham, Md. 20706, or by calling [301] 436-7400.

The Eisenhower dollar will be the seventh commemorative coin program since 1982.